

Policy Identifier: Procedure for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

Policy Title:	Procedure for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals
Description:	This procedure sets out the steps required for those seeking ethical approval for research
Author (Position):	Marino Ethics in Research Committee
Version:	2.1
Approved By:	MIE Governing Body
Policy Approval Date:	June 2023
Date of Next Policy Review:	June 2027 (or as necessary)

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1 Context

- 1.1 Those seeking ethical approval for research are required to read carefully the guidance notes at the start of the application form.
- 1.2 The form must be completed electronically, using as much space as needed to include all required information.
- 1.3 The completed form must be checked and authorised by the Principal Investigator. Electronic signatures are not acceptable and unsigned forms will be returned.
- 1.4 Ethical approval for research activity is assessed based on three levels:
 - i. Level 0 – meta-analysis of extant data or research that does not involve human (or animal) participants, their material or data;
 - ii. Level 1 – research carrying little or no risks or discomfort greater than usually encountered during normal daily life;
 - iii. Level 2 – moderate to high-risk research, i.e. risk or discomfort is greater than usually encountered during normal daily life. This level includes all research involving children (i.e. under persons under 18 years of age) and vulnerable adults.
- 1.5 The summary below (Table 1) describes the action taken for Levels 0, 1 or 2 approvals in relation to research conducted by students in the Marino Institute of Education (MIE).
- 1.6 Procedures for monitoring ongoing studies require mandatory annual reporting from approved supervisors.
- 1.7 All modifications which require ethics approval must be submitted to the Marino Ethics in Research Committee (MERC) and approved prior to implementation. Annual reporting to MERC is standard procedure.
- 1.8 All applications are submitted initially to the MERC administrator and retained & archived after approval by the MERC Administrator.
- 1.9 Exemplar templates for consent forms are available to download from the following MIE [website](#).

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Table 1: Levels for Approval of Ethical Research Activity

Level 0	Level 1	Level 2
Student and supervisor agree that research is Level 0. Student completes form, which is signed by supervisor and the Course Leader/Head of Department.	Student completes form and submits to supervisor.	Student completes form and submits to supervisor.
Supervisor keeps a copy of signed statement (refer to Marino Ethics in Research Committee (MERC) if needed) and submits a copy to MERC administrator for archiving.	Supervisor checks, signs, and submits form (or returns to student for re-submission) to the Course Leader/Head of Department for countersigning, prior to submission of the completed form to the MERC administrator.	Supervisor checks, signs and submits form (or returns to student for submission) to the Course Leader/Head of Department for countersigning, prior to submission of the completed form to the MERC administrator.
	MERC – approves or refers application, which is communicated to student and supervisor by the MERC administrator, who files a copy for archive.	MERC – approves/refers/involves ‘expert’ from outside Committee/expert for advice. The decision is communicated to student and supervisor by the MERC administrator, who files a copy for archive.

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- 1.10 Questions concerning the ethical conduct of research in the MIE can be addressed to the Chair of the MERC.
- 1.11 MERC will provide continuing professional development as necessary or as requested on ethics in research for members of the MERC committee, prospective members of the MERC committee, personnel who will have delegated powers of signing off that ethical requirements of projects have been met, and for other staff members.
- 1.12 Ordinary meetings of the MERC shall be convened at least four times per year. A sub-committee of the MERC will convene monthly between September and June to examine all submissions made within that month. At the start of each year, MERC will inform staff members of the dates on which the meetings will be held for that academic year.
- 1.13 A study should not collect identifying information from participants unless it is essential to the study protocol.
- 1.14 Applications are welcome in the Irish or English language. The MERC administrator will make available the Irish and translated version, as appropriate, to MERC members.
- 1.15 The deadline for receipt of all MERC applications is two weeks prior to the date of the following MERC meeting.
- 1.16 All appeals to the operation of this procedure will be considered by the President of MIE, who may make a decision or refer the application elsewhere (typically to another ethics board) for consideration.
- 1.17 This policy will be effective from September 2018 and will be reviewed as necessary in light of its operation.

2 Responsibility

Responsibility for implementing this procedure rests with the MERC Chairperson.

3 Related Documents

- 3.1 [Ethics in Research Policy](#)
- 3.2 [Application for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals](#)